A MODERN VENUS AND ADONIS.....

BY

HOWARD HALL

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
PS3513
Chap. Copyright No.
.A33M6
Shelf
1897
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

HOWARD HALL.

1847 — 73354 2

A Modern Venus and Adonis

PS 3515
.A 2516
1897

One summer's day a gentle maid,
Wandering at will 'neath sun and shade,
Along a sylvan stream that strayed,
With lazy pace, adown the glade,
Had reached a pond where froglets played
She paused beside a log decayed
And watched the bull-frogs promenade.
She marvelled: "They are not afraid!
"'Tis very strange, one would think they'd
"Leap affrighted and dismayed
'Into the pond below the grade!
"Tell me, Friend Frogs, why look so staid?
"Come ope' your throats, here I've delayed
"To hear your croaking serenade!"
Her sweet commands the frogs obeyed,
And lo! the din their voices made
Awoke a slumbering renegade:

A handsome rogue
From cap to brog'
His dress the nattiest e'er in vogue.
He chanced to lie
Asleep hard by,
Beneath the sun-red summer sky.
Lifting his head
From the grassy bed,
He spied a path, which, winding, led
To where the frogs,
In Nature's togs,
Were playing tag among the bogs.
Now list to this:
The gentle Miss
Had not been spied by eyes of his;
The frogs alone,
Perchance their tone,
Like magnets, drew him to their zone,
Through foliage green,
Whose leafy screen
Shaded this pristine pathway, e'en
To where some vines
An oak entwines
And weds it to a group of pines;
Where one can see
Quite easily
The pond, the brook, the fallen tree,
Or log decayed,
Whereon the maid
Sat dreaming, while the froglets played.
Parting the leaves,
The youth perceives—
The croaking imps, whose song relieves
The solitude;
They seemed imbued
With anything but quietude.
Again he raised
His eyes, and gazed,
And lo! beheld—entranced—amazed—
The maid! Surprise
Shone in his eyes

His feelings—well, we can surmise
With what degree
Of pleasure, he
Beheld such fair Virginity.—
So gracefully
The maiden lay
He sighed : " Can she be mortal clay,
" Or some fair spright
" Who, when the night
" Her curtains draw, will take her flight?
" Oh beauty rare!
" A face more fair,
" Or eyes—a more bewitching pair—
" Ne'er maiden bore
' On earth before!
' Diana, on her native shore,
" With all her nude,
" Voluptuous brood,
" Possess a beauty plain and rude
" Compared to her's!
" But soft! She stirs!"
Then quick to him the thought occurs
That should she hear
Him skulking near
She'd dash away like frightened deer.
So, with cautious tread
And cogent dread,
He drew so near, he caught the thread
Of her discourse,
And he, of course,
Transfixed by some mysterious force
Her tale o'erheard;
And every word
His soul with deepest passion stirred;
With hope infused
His heart enthused;
And Conscience slept—while thus she mused:

" Oh Muse awake! and swiftly float
" O'er Love's pure lake in Eros' boat.
" Its surface scan from shore to shore
" For one true man I may adore
" Whose heart is free and lion strong;
" Who'd fight with thee for Right, tho' Wrong
" Should 'pear to him in semblance of
" A cherubim of hallowed love;
" Though angels' smiles should 'lume her face,
" And, all the wiles of Circe's race
" Were her's to wield, to tempt his soul
" From Virtue's field, to Passion's goal;
" He would, despite her subtle charms,
" With fearless might burst from her arms;
" And, should she cling to him and pray,
" He'd kill and fling her corpse away;
" And, standing free, with proud disdain,
" Command of thee: ' Remove the slain!'
' Thus should Wrong die—that Right may live.
" To none would I my love e'er give
" That would not fight thus fearlessly

'Gainst Passion's might and sorcery
So turn thy helm that should there be,
Within thy realm, a man thus free;
Whose lips ne'er felt Love's honied kiss
Whose soul ne'er dealt in Passion's bliss
However remote his abode may be,
Propell thy boat there speedily.
'Oh speak to him—nor let thy voice
'Be harsh or dim—bid him rejoice.
To him declare that thou hast seen
A maiden fair—a radiant queen
'Let Love conduct to guide thy tongue
That 'twill produce desire among
'His guarded thoughts, to taste the wine
The thrilling draughts from Cupid's vine
'Then lend thy oar to him and say:
'Brave youth, before the dying day
'Is marked by yon
'Fast setting sun,
'Thou must have seen this waiting one.'

Then, pensively
And dreamily,
She sank into a reverie,
Unconscious of
The youth above,
She sweetly sighed: "Oh what is love?"
He, hearing this,
Thought 'twan't amiss
To make reply: "Sweet maid 'tis bliss!
"'Tis ecstacy
"Beyond degree;
'Tis what I feel, sweet maid, for thee!
"Nay—do not start
'Like frightened hart!
Fair one, I would to thee impart
'A story, sweet,
'Of love—replete
"With truth—before you make retreat."

While fear and pride
To truth allied
Beamed in her face, the girl replied:
'I fear, kind sir,
"I must demur,
'And leave thee, lest the blighting blur
'Of Eve's dread shame
'Be on my name
'Despoiling Virtue's honored fame."

'Oh stay," he cries
'I do agnize
Thou'rt right—but come, we'll compromise.
I mean thee well,
My gentle belle,
'And beg that thou wilt hear me tell
My love, for we
Love's mystery
"Can solve, if only we agree!
Didst thou not send

" Thine aged friend,
" Thy muse, to search, from end to end,
" Through Love's domain ?
" Can'st thou complain,
" When he has sent thee one, who, fain
" Would call thee mate ?
" Reciprocate !
" Give love for love ; why hesitate ?
" The sunbeams *kiss* the blushing rose
At day's inception and its close ;
Waves *kiss* the shore ; the gentle breeze
" Love words whisper to the trees :
" 'Tis earth's *warm pressure* bursts the seed
" Of plant and flower. The River's reeds
" Bend down the stream to catch the last
" Love message of the waves as they flow past ;
" The clinging tendrils of the vine
" Doth teach thee how thou shouldst entwine
" Thy unlearned arms ; the snow-drifts melt
" When first the Spring's caress is felt ;
" The weeping willow bows its head,
" Not in tears, but joy instead —
The joy that prompts a maiden's blush,
" That causes all her blood to rush
" Into her face, the while she tries
" To hide its hue by feigned sighs ;
" All things in nature teach you this :
" Thou wert born fair maid to kiss,
" To love—be loved—and caressed ;
" To give that with which thou wouldst be blest "

'Twas thus he spent
His argument,
And who can say, with what intent !

With drooping eyes,
The maid, unwise,
In accents, sweet and low, replies :
" Thy gallantry
" Impresses me
" With confidence and trust in thee !
" Although, I feel
" A strong appeal
" From Conscience to check thy zeal.
" Yet see—I stay !
" Although the day
" Into the past has fled away.
" I can't explain
" Why I remain,
" Or why 'twould fill my heart with pain
" Were you to go ;
" But, do you know,
" I fear that Fate has willed it so. "

" Nay, do not fear
" Remaining here;
" Come, sit you down by me, my dear.
" I'll tell you of
" My tale of love;
" That famed, cooing turtle-dove,

"Of Cupid's dart,
"And wondrous art,
"And all Love's mysteries impart,
"The which, to hear,
"Will banish fear,
"And all of your misgivings, drear
"Behold!" Quoth he,
"O'er yonder lea
The golden sun doth smile on thee;
And, through these bars,
The bright-eyed stars,
Anon, will check this bank with scars
Of silvery light,
And put to flight
Thy foolish dread of somber night."

Why should they stand
Upon the strand
With Cupid's couch so close at hand?
So, gazing at
The sun, they sat
Upon the grass-grown emerald mat
That lined the bank;
The great orb sank
Into the ocean's spacious tank;
The moon, the while,
With placid smile,
Rose, round and red, in radiant style,
And shed its bright
Refulgent light
Adown the shadowy paths of night.
A gentle breeze,
From saphire seas,
Stole softly through the yielding trees;
Its breath, impent
With sensuous scent,
Thrilled them with Love's sweet sentiment.
The frogs still croaked
As if provoked;
The owl his woeful hoot invoked;
With sweet intent,
Dame Nature lent
Her fairest smile and blandishment,
To charm the pair,
Who, loitering there,
Thought never was a night so fair!
The subtle spell
Of Silence fell
Upon the twain! Love's dreams compel
Mute lips, forsooth,
When Life's dear youth
First feels Desire's burning truth!
The eloquence
Of love, intense
Steals o'er their passive continuence!
The fierce desire
Of Passion's fire
Impells this artful youth, to try her
With one sweet kiss;

Oh joy! Oh bliss!
Oh cup of liquid hapiness
From burning lips
To finger tips
Love's nectar sibilantly drips
"Oh love," he cries
With burning sighs—
"I read life's meaning in thine eyes!
"Thy touch a thrill!
"Thy voice, a trill
"Of thrush like melody! A still
"Sweet sense decrees
"Our destinies.
"Shall waft us o'er Hymenial Seas!
"I'll careful be,
"My dear, of thee,
"If thou wilt yield thy heart to me.
"In Love's retreats
"We'll taste the sweets
"Transported there by Cupid's fleets."
All mystified,
The maiden sighed:
"Oh would that I were now thy bride!
"For then I might
"Thy love requite
"Fearless of dread Dishonor's blight."

This thoughtless hint
Struck Cupid's flint
And lo! A flame that knew no stint
Coursed through their veins.
Swiftly it gains
Complete control. In Passion's chains,
Encircling round
The twain are bound,
And thus, by Cupid's host, were found.

The frogs relate,
With grinning pate,
What happened there that evening late.

If you should stray
Some summer's day,
Adown this vine embowered way,
Just take a look
For this pleasant nook,
You'll find it where a babbling brook
Leaps swiftly o'er,
With rush and roar,
Some jagged rocks; then—as before
Flows gently on
Its course; anon
It pours itself into a pond.
I'm sure you'll trace,
With ease, the place:
Follow your right hand, as you face
The way the stream,
With glint and gleam
Pursues its course; if not a dream,
You'll find the brook

Whereon they sank,
And Cupid's sweet elixir drank
If you should hear
A croaking queer
Of some beworted bull-frog near,
Ask him to state,
'Chance he'll relate,
And thus my tale substantiate!

MORAL.

The Moral lies,
You may surmise,
Deep hidden from perverted eyes.
But some may see
That Love may be
The harbor of a dangerous sea;
Beyond whose bright
Coruscant light
Are troubled waves and starless night.
The trusting maid,
Who seeks the shade
Of Cupid's bowers, may evade
The artful knave,
And haply save
Her innocence from Passion's wave.
By truth thus taught:
Should she be sought,
That Love is ever danger fraught.
In olden times—
So run the rhymes
Of Avon's bard—in other clime
There lived a youth
So fraught with truth
That not the sorcery, forsooth,
Of Venus, fair
Beyond compare,
Could rouse Love's lion from its lair!
So con'inent
No blandishment
Could lure him! But how different
The youth to-day!
No maiden may
Yield to Cup d's subtle sway
But that her fame
And honored name
Stands ever in the pale of Blame.
Since first the plan
Of love began
The maid has e'er been sought by man.
And it will be
The destiny
Of man to ever bend the knee
To Beauty's shrine!
And it is thine,
Oh Woman fair, to sip the wine
Of Pleasure, sweet,
In Love's retreat,
Or pause where Love and Passion meet.
If dark Desire
Should e'er conspire
To kindle Lust's Promethian fire.
Avoid the strife,
Become a wife
And thus fulfill the Law of Life!

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 021 929 741 5